

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 21 are pending in the present application. Claim 21 is newly added.

In section 3 of the Office Action, claims 1- 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,436,723 to Kunselman et al. (hereinafter "the Kunselman et al. patent") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,510,273 to Quinn (hereinafter the Quinn patent"). Applicants are traversing the rejection.

Claim 1 provides for an optical device. The optical device includes, inter alia, a flexible sensor array in close contact with a surface of a support element and having a surface with a shape corresponding to a focal surface.

The Kunselman et al. patent discloses a system having an array of sensors 20A – 20H disposed along a Rowland circle 22. The Office Action recognizes that the Kunselman et al. patent fails to teach or suggest (a) a support mount having a shape corresponding to a focal surface and (b) a flexible sensor array. Accordingly, the Office Action suggests that the Quinn patent discloses these features.

The Quinn patent is directed toward a method of assembling a chip array having a plurality of chips spaced a predetermined distance from one another (col. 2, lines 60 – 62). FIGS. 2 and 3 show a curved arrangement of a substrate 10 and chips 12 on a workpiece 20 (col. 3, lines 62 – 67). **The substrate is flexible** (col. 2, line 64). However, surfaces of chips 12 that are adjacent to substrate 10 remain planar and do not exactly conform to the shape of the surface of substrate 10 (col. 4, line 13 – 18). Thus, **silicon chips 12 are not flexible**. Therefore, the Quinn patent neither describes nor suggests a flexible sensor array, as recited in claim 1.

Moreover, the curved arrangement of substrate 10 and chips 12 on workpiece 20 as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3 is an interim manufacturing step (col. 3, lines 10 - 15). FIG. 4 of the Quinn patent shows that in a subsequent manufacturing step, substrate 10 is removed

from workpiece 20, and that substrate 10 returns to its straight shape so that a desired spacing d between neighboring chips is obtained (col. 6, lines 10 – 24). Substrate 10 and chips 12 are not described as being operable in the curved arrangement, but instead are specifically intended for operation in a planar arrangement with a spacing d between adjacent chips. Consequently, whereas the Kunselman et al. patent discloses an array of sensors along **a Rowland circle**, and whereas the arrangement in the Quinn patent is ultimately **a planar arrangement with a spacing d between adjacent chips**, there is no motivation for a combination of the Kunselman et al. and Quinn patents, and moreover, such a combination does not appear to be technically feasible. As such, the cited combination of the Kunselman et al. and Quinn patents cannot serve as a basis for a section 103(a) rejection of claim 1.

In view of the reasoning provided above, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over the cited combination of the Kunselman et al. and Quinn patents.

Claims 2 – 8 depend from claim 1. By virtue of this dependence, claims 2 – 8 are also patentable over the cited combination of the Kunselman et al. and Quinn patents.

Claim 9 is an independent claim, and similarly to claim 1, recites a flexible sensor array. Claim 9 is patentable over the cited combination of the Kunselman et al. and Quinn patents for reasons similar to those provide above in support of claim 1.

Claims 10 – 19 depend from claim 9. By virtue of this dependence, claims 10 - 19 are also patentable over the cited combination of the Kunselman et al. and Quinn patents.

Claim 20 is an independent claim, and similarly to claim 1, recites a flexible sensor array. Claim 9 is patentable over the cited combination of the Kunselman et al. and Quinn patents for reasons similar to those provide above in support of claim 1.

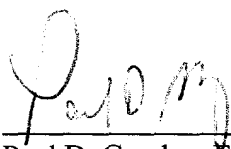
Claim 21 is newly added. Support for claim 21 is provided in the specification at page 6, line 26 – page 7, line 7. A favorable consideration that also results in the allowance of claim 21 is earnestly solicited.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims presented in this application patentably distinguish over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and that this application be passed to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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